

Hamilton County Plan Commission

September 14, 2004

Mr. Habig called the official meeting of the Hamilton County Plan Commission to order at 7:31 p.m.

Members Present: Frank Habig, Ron Hall, Steve Holt, David Musselman, Bill Rice, [Steve Schwartz,] Kent Ward, and Linda Williams. Absent: Jim Galloway and Steve Schwartz. Also present: Charles Kiphart, Director; Randy Leerkamp, Legal Counsel; and Linda Burdett, Secretary.

Declaration of Quorum: Mr. Habig declared a quorum with seven out of nine members present.

Guests: See sign-in sheet.

Communications/Reports: Nothing to present.

Mr. Habig asked if everyone had received the minutes for last month's meeting and asked if there were any corrections.

Mr. Musselman made a **motion to approve**.

Mr. Ward seconded.

With no changes or corrections... Mr. Habig called for the vote. **7 yes votes... 0 no votes.**

Public Comment: Mr. Habig opened the floor to anyone wishing to address the board and with no one stepping forward... Mr. Habig continued the meeting.

Correspondence: Nothing to present.

President's Report: Mr. Habig stated he had nothing to report.

New Business: Mr. Habig identified [**PC-Re-Zone-0007-09-2004**] a re-zone request of 10.0 acres from an A-2 (Agricultural/Large lot Residential) Zone District to an A-4 (Agricultural/Business) Zone District for a winery. Would you please step up to the podium.

Rebecca Harger, of 16222 Prairie Baptist Road in Noblesville, stated her name and address for the record. **Brian Harger, of 16222 Prairie Baptist Road in Noblesville**, stated his name and address for the record. We are seeking a re-zone specifically to conduct business as an Indiana Farm Winery. The definition of an Indiana Farm Winery allows people the ability to produce wine and sell wine. This is actually a type of liquor license. They position it as a manufacturer; someone who is growing the grapes

and producing the wine on the facility and in the same place where you're having a tasting room and selling wine by the glass and by the bottle. It allows people to sell at wholesale also. The public tasting room is what brings us here for the re-zone. We would like to have commercial space where people could come to and spend some time on the property that we live on. We have three main goals that are part of our business plan. The first goal is to maintain the agricultural use of the land. We both come from farming backgrounds. The second goal is to synergize with other businesses that are nearby for an agra-tourism kind of situation. We want to give people more than one reason to come out in the country to do some fun things. Our third goal is to create a public space. Things are changing rapidly around us. Long established farmland is starting to include some suburban housing and even some light industry. Our goal for the winery is to create a place where people involved in all those things can find some common grounds. We would hope they would use our facility for business meetings or family gatherings or whatever we can do to help serve the community and create a place where people can rub shoulders and learn to understand and appreciate each other as we are all struggling with growing pains in Hamilton County.

Mr. Musselman asked Mrs. Harger if this was just going to be for wines grown there.

Mrs. Harger stated that they would be creating wines from grapes that they grow. We will also be creating wine from juice that may come from somewhere else.

Mr. Hall asked Mrs. Harger how long it would take from the time you start putting out grape seedlings, or whatever they start as, until the time they can be used to make wine. (2) Do you anticipate in the interim purchasing the fruit or juice elsewhere and processing it here? (3) Have you done any planting yet? (4) What is the situation for having soil good for grape growing? (5) You'll be doing the processing there. Will you also be doing the bottling there? (6) I'm going to assume with 10 acres that this will largely be a hand operation? (7) This would involve employees or not?

Mrs. Harger stated that in the third year the grapevine will produce fruit. I've heard that you pinch that off and wait until the fourth year. (2) I think we are at least two to three years out before we are open for business. We just saw the re-zone as our first step. (3) We planted 200 vines this past spring. Each vine will produce about a gallon of wine and 200 gallons is the limit that an amateur wine maker can make without excise tax or being in business. (4) Most of the soil in Indiana is good for growing corn and soybeans. It is very fertile soil. Wine grapes tend to not like real fertile soil. The varieties that we will be growing we expect to be mostly native varieties that are suited to our soil and our climate.

Mr. Harger stated that there are about 300 acres of grapes currently being grown in Indiana.

Mrs. Harger answering. (5) Yes. (6) Yes. About 3 to 3 ½ acres will be grapes. We have a lot of trees on our property. (7) Maybe part-time employees or maybe some people on a contract basis during harvest season. For the most part... I just see the two of us.

Mr. Habig asked Mrs. Harger if this was going to be mostly seasonal where it's open to the public.

(2) Will that be seven days a week or just weekends?

Mrs. Harger stated that she saw it year round. Maybe with the exception of taking January maybe February off. Whatever the market will support. (2) I'm thinking maybe six days a week. Working Saturday and Sunday and taking a day off during the week. Maybe from noon to 6:00 p.m. each day. That is pretty typical for Indiana Wineries.

Mrs. Williams asked for clarification... would this be like some of the wineries down in southern Indiana where they have barbeques and things like that?

Mrs. Harger stated that she could see planned events like that. Special things that you would bring caterers in to serve food and maybe some music. The crowd size and parking would be something we would have to consider before we get into something like that but then again... it would be what the market would support.

With nothing further from the Board... Mr. Habig opened the hearing to the public at 7:46 p.m. and with no one from the public stepping forward to address the Board... Mr. Habig closed the public portion of the hearing at 7:46 p.m.

Mr. Ward made a motion to forward this with a positive recommendation for the re-zone to the County Commissioners.

Mr. Musselman seconded.

Mr. Rice stated he thought this was an admirable undertaking although I think it's going to be quite a challenge. Up at Purdue there is a wine tasting room on campus. They put a lot of research into making wine as well as growing and identifying adaptive varieties so I think as far as growing grapes in Indiana... that's changing. One article stated that 12 -13 years ago there were 9 wineries in the state. Now there are 30. Part of the money they pay the wine council goes to support that program. And they are going to be protecting area within the county that is starting to develop and in the future agri-tourism is probably going to be the source of agricultural interest in Hamilton County. So it may be worth preserving some of that.

Mr. Hall stated he felt that this was a very good land use that provides a segway between the rapid developing residential properties and the more intense commercial properties and keeps us in touch with the agricultural heritage in the area. I am real excited to see this. My only concern is that this just seems to fit awkwardly into our zone options. Maybe as we're doing our comprehensive revision we need to look at the need for agri-tourism or small farm commercial types of land uses. Maybe we need to look at another zone to fit in either the ag. district or the commercial district or something that fits this kind of land use better than what we have here. I think this is a positive enough step that we need to encourage it in the future by making something that fits better with that kind of land use.

With nothing from the Board... Mr. Habig called for the vote. **7 yes votes... 0 no votes.**

Old Business: None to present.

Director's Report: None to present.

Legal Counsel Report: None to present.

Mr. Habig stated that the next Plan Commission meeting would be October 12, 2004.

With nothing further on the agenda... Mr. Habig adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Frank Habig III, President

Date

Linda Burdett, Secretary

Date